The Congregationalist

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"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." — Galatians 5:1

FROM THE OLD COUNTRY

Albert D. Belden, D. D., London, England

The Next Ten Years in British Congregationalism

Under the energetic leadership of Howard Stanley, the General Secretary, the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in harmony with the title above, has set up eight Commissions on various aspects of denominational responsibility. They are, briefly, as follows:

Commission 1: This has three enquiries; (a) The relation of the Churches to each other in the County Unions, in the Council and in the Assembly; (b) The nature of Christian Unity and the challenge to the Churches; (c) The nature of Christian oversight.

Commission 2: To prepare a statement of faith for the use of our Churches.

Commission 3: A survey at County Union level for; (a) economy in the use of buildings; (b) Church Extension and its finance; (c) Rural Church situation and enlistment of lay pastors.

Commission 4: A study of the nature, life, and work of local Churches over against contemporary conditions.

Commission 5: To consider the nature of the Church's missionary obligation as to its adequate discharge, and the relation of the Union to the Commonwealth and London Missionary Societies.

Commission 6: Formed from members of the existing Colleges Commission and Ministerial Training Committee to advise on: (a) Nature of the Ministry and meaning of ordination; (b) Scope of pastoral ministry; (c) Recruitment and continuance of ministry; (d) Relation of Colleges to the Union, and their maintenance.

Commission 7: To advise how the Union can more effectively exercise moral influence on the life of the nation, and how local Churches can do this in their communities.

Commission 8: To give attention to certain administrative problems,— the relation of General Purposes and financial administration and kindred matters.

This is a formidable program and the personnel of the Commissions is not yet quite clear. If manned only from the Council there will be some dangerous gaps of feeling and judgment. In my next letter I shall comment on some of the more important issues.

CONGREGATIONAL BOOKSHELF

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

Three new biographies show the glory of 18th century British Congregationalism when Presbyterians were growing coldly rationalistic and Anglicans were going wild over Wesleyan revivals. Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge and William Roby reveal that happy blending of head and heart which is the Congregational Way. Their lives stretch across the century, adding lustre to the cause of Independency and contributing much to a well-rounded presentation of the Gospel.

Whenever we sing "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" we pay tribute to Isaac Watts, pastor of Mark Lane Chapel, London. Among his hearers were wealthy merchants and prominent statesmen. Wesley used his hymns and Unitarians claimed his sympathies. Watts was that type of man, dedicated, charitable, urbane and persuasive. In our day we remember his hymn writing; in his day he was equally famous as a theologian, educator and minister.

Philip Doddridge wrote a classic devotional manual "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." Minister at Castle Hill Congregational Church, he organized Northampton Academy, introduced lectures in English instead of Latin, and used John Locke as a textbook when Oxford had banned it. From then on the Nonconformist academies became the real proponents of sound learning for the Age of Reason.

William Roby should be remembered as one of the greatest exponents of world-wide Congregationalism. His ministry at Manchester produced twenty-two home missionaries and more than a dozen sent by the London Missionary Society to Africa, India and the South Seas. Roby's Academy laid the foundation of Lancashire Independent College which has a noble record of Congregational service.

Arthur Davis, *Isaac Watts,* Independent Press, London 8s 6d

W. G. Robinson, *William Roby,* Independent Press, London 8s 6d

G. F. Nuttall, Ed. *Philip Doddridge,* Independent Press London 7s 6d

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Rev. Neil H. Swanson, Jr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin

We need names. And you can help.

As I have become more involved in this work, it has become increasingly evident that one of our deepest needs is for contacts with sympathetic people in as many Congregational Churches as possible.

We need such contacts so that materials can be sent to them when the proposed constitution of "The United Church of Christ" is sent to the Churches. We are anxious to help Congregational people, wherever they are, to have material which discusses the basic issues involved in the proposed constitution.

We also need names of sympathetic and open-minded Congregationalists so that they can be kept informed of what is happening. We need such names, too, so they may be assured that when they decide to remain Congregational they will not be alone.

It is true that we already have many names, but you will know people who are not on our lists. And each person you know will be acquainted with some people whom you do not know.

You have probably heard the story of the small boy who excitedly reported to his schoolmates that he had recently shaken the hand, which shook the hand, which shook the hand, which shook the hand of the President of the United States. Because we believe that each of you is just a few hand shakes away from a number of concerned Congregationalists who are not currently on any of our lists, we intend to start a process of fanning out from one person to another. There is no better time than now to begin this "Chain of Names Project."

Please send to 176 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 3, Wisconsin, as many names as you can of Congregational people whom you believe are anxious to preserve the Congregational Way. Include an accurate address. And, if possible, indicate the name of the church with which each person is connected.

A letter will go to each person whose name you send asking if the person wishes to be on our list. If so, we will ask for some names and addresses from him. In this way the chain of names can begin.

We need names! And we need your help to get them.

MISSIONS AND ECUMENICITY

Dr. Henry David Gray, Hartford, Connecticut

On February 26th there came to my desk a statement by Alford Carleton, executive vice president of the American Board. It had been presented to the "Midwinter Meeting," an annual gathering of paid denominational leaders, promotional experts, committee members, and selected state conference leaders which is probably more influential in the affairs of our Churches than meetings of the elected General Council.

The statement is a plea for missionary support, a vital and worthy cause. The receipts and expenditures of 1947 and 1957 are contrasted. These figures show a 63.2% gain in receipts through promotion-supported work, a 17.5% increase from investments, etc., a 42.7% decline in Church gifts for designated work, and a 5% decline in income from individuals. Over-all the decade's gain was 18.3%.

The expenditure items are as follows: operation of missions overseas — plus 0.5%; promotion and services to denomination — plus 99.0%; home administrative expenses — plus 40.0%; ecumenical projects — plus 123.0%. The first item, missions overseas, also includes heavy overseas administrative costs.

At its close, the statement asks several questions, such as, "When will we . . . give *adequate* support, both *material* and *spiritual*, to our young people who give their lives to the mission and to the Christians of all lands with whom they bear the heat and burden of the day?" We are told that "the measure of our stewardship and the test of our faith" lies "in the answer to (these) questions."

What is the Answer?

The answer is, in part, at least, that when a Church or individual gives to support our young people in their mission work, it has a right to expect the money it gives to go to missions and not to "ecumenical projects," fancy promotion and 40% administrative increase. Missions (including overseas administration) actually received one-half of one per cent of the $266,364 increase between 1947 and 1957!

The answer is, in part, that direct sponsorship of missionary work by Church or individual has given place to support of a euphemistically named "Christian World Mission" which is reported to use up in costs *one fourth* of the amount raised ($311,124 out of $1,279,763). Just how near is this to the borderline which separates proper and improper use of missionary giving? Should not *every cent* of the money given to missions be used for the purposes for which it was given? Should not all other costs be financed *out of money given for these other purposes?* Surely it is misleading, if not immoral, to send out high-priced literature picturing mission work and pleading for money for missions and *then allocate one half of one per cent of more than a quarter million dollars to missions.*

The answer is, in large part, that the spiritual dynamic upon which Christian giving depends has been replaced by a promotional technique and "an apportionment dollar," which is beginning to boomerang. *That* is probably the real explanation of the drop in church-designated giving and in individual giving.

Let it be noted that, in this same decade, the giving to missions of one Church in our fellowship has risen from $93,660 to $244,137, another has increased from $29,781 to $116,988 and a third, from $30,859 to $50,431. Each of these Churches stresses direct personal relationships between missionary and member. And it may be worth noting that the increase in these three Churches totals almost as much as the entire increase in the whole American Board income ($257,256 compared to $266,364)!!

The answer to the call of the world for Christ is deeper dedication to our Churches. What's needed is not cleverer "communication" but rather a sincere spiritual re-birth which reestablishes the personal concern of member for missionary, and which sees to it that increased missionary giving in the next decade is not "apportioned" so as to supply 123.0% more for ecumenical projects and 0.5% for overseas missions.

THE WORTH

AS TWO MINISTERS SEE IT

Dr. Harry R. Butman, Los Angeles, California

I was taught in seminary that Congregationalism is an ellipse with two foci; one is autonomy, the other is fellowship. I prefer our principle of fellowship to the method of legal connectionalism because fellowship is the better means of expressing man's dual nature as an individual and as a member of society. George Buttrick once said that the chief problem of modern man was to maintain his individuality while continuing to honor the corporate bond. I have a deep conviction that the Congregational principle of fellowship is the only form of ecclesiastical structure spacious enough to house man's individuality and man's relatedness without warfare between them.

Individuality and Relatedness

When we look carefully at man we see that he is an indissoluble blend of individuality and relatedness. Any philosophy of life, any code of conduct, that ignores either factor lacks wholeness. "No man liveth unto himself alone," says Paul wisely: and this is sometimes distorted into the dogma that man is nothing but a social creature. But in the womb's dark solitude is a man conceived; he enters this world alone, he leaves it alone; the group cannot be born for him, the group cannot die for him. There is much truth in Thomas Wolfe's observation that the prevailing weather of the human soul is loneliness. Yet this solitariness exists side by side with daily, intimate, and inescapable connection with other men. The title of the recently popular book, "The Lonely Crowd" is a summary of man's life in time.

Jesus' Balance

Jesus had perfect balance in this matter of the crowd and the single soul. His words reveal that he was sharply aware of the dual nature of man, and his ministry reflects that awareness. He preached to the many on the Mount, He fed four thousand and five thousand, He received multitudinous plaudits on the day of the triumphal entry. But He also spoke deep words to the one woman by Jacob's Well, to Nicodemus who came alone by night; He told of the one lost coin, the one lost sheep, and the one lost boy; His final prayer was a lonely crying under the little rustling leaves of the ancient olives of Gethsemane. And it is worthy of note that when He specifically named the group which should form a church (for a church was needed) He said that two or three — the minimum social number — were enough to be hallowed by His continuing presence.

It is an error to honor the corporate bond by such organization and magnitude as will destroy the individual. This is the folly of the leaders of mechanical ecumenicity, who seek to express man's social nature in ecclesiastical machinery. History may harshly judge this ecumenicity of organization as a religious reflection of the totalitarianism of our time. The individual cannot live and develop within a strong collective framework. I have recently read "Dr. Zhivago," and I am impressed with the fact that while Pasternak lauds the idea of individualism with singing words, the actual individuals in the novel, sensitive and strong alike, either die or disintegrate under the savage pressures of collectivism. The single soul cannot live when the corporate bond is over-honored.

Freedom and Fellowship

Congregationalism has my allegiance because its principle of fellowship gives great liberty to the single soul while binding him to other Christians with the strong invisible bonds of respect, love, and common purpose. Our Congregational Way is a path broad enough to permit men to walk together side by side, not because they must, but because they may. It is a way which fully acknowledges the freedom of the Christian man, and yet makes him ever remember that he is one of a brotherhood of believers.

Dr. George W. Owen, Hyde Park, Massachusetts

A Congregationalist, in the present state of the merger of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church, and the *proposed* merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church with the Congregational Christian Churches, is one who believes in a continuation of the democratic principles which have characterized Congregationalism during its history.

We are Continuing Congregationalists because we believe:

1, that the world today needs the challenge and leaven of a free and democratic faith such as Congregationalism has exerted for more than three hundred years, with a profound effect upon the political, social and religious life of the world.

2, that the so-called United Church contains the seeds of an overhead government that is directly opposed to the teachings of Jesus, who said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you." (Matthew 20: 25,26) We recognize the assurance of democracy, but history proves that gradual assumption of great power may follow the granting of a little power.

3, that religious progress is made, not by ecumenical organizations, but by a frank expression of differing convictions, and that the arrival at truth is a composite result of openly evaluating many different beliefs.

4, that the prayer of Jesus that His disciples "may all be one" (John 17:21) is a matter of spirit, and has no reference to organization.

5, that there should be free speech without bitterness. *Why* not have an open and careful study of both sides of the merger question before the merger?

6, that with the merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church still in the discussion stage, and our convictions as they are, we are compelled to be openly continuing Congregationalists or else keep a cowardly silence.

7, that the so-called United Church is dividing Christians instead of uniting them.

8, that we prefer to be identified with the Protestant millions who are now practicing freedom and fellowship in religion.

9, that we cannot conscientiously approve, nor engage in, some of the methods used in merging the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches with the Evangelical and Reformed Church, some of which are:

a. the denial by the General Council of its representative character as agent of the churches.

b. proceeding without definite backing from the churches.

c. the claim to the denominational funds which the churches had entrusted to its care for various purposes. Financing the merger with these funds could not be construed to be the will of the churches as it involved a radical departure from Congregationalism.

d. the suppression of free speech in the ADVANCE and the UNITED CHURCH HERALD.

e. the "assumption" method of seeking to absorb churches into the merger without their vote.

We claim no special insights; but we have convictions which we cannot, in honesty, violate. So we are continuing Congregationalists.

OF OUR WAY

AS TWO LAY MEMBERS SEE IT

Mr. Walter P. Schmitter, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Congregational Way leads back to the primitive apostolic Churches of Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth and Rome. They enjoyed local autonomy but maintained fellowship with each other through visiting preachers and by letters and mutual helpfulness. Early in the Third Century, Old Testament concepts intruded and the altar reappeared. This necessitated buildings set aside for liturgy, together with an administering priesthood. Soon primacy was claimed by the Bishop of Rome. The Emperor, perceiving that the church could unite his divergent factions, made membership mandatory. Institutionalized ecumenicity had been achieved!

For centuries the Congregational Way became obscured by overgrowth. Occasional outcroppings of isolated Free Church bodies were ground under the heel of authority with dispatch. The Reformation came, but as soon as they became protectorates of the state, the protesting churches repressed religious liberty with equal ardor and thoroughness. In time, those who sought freedom of conscience fled to the American wilderness, beginning with the Pilgrims.

Retrogression, Then Disillusionment

But in 1708 the onerous Saybrook Platform, calling for a consociation for repelling heresy and expelling dissenters, was made law in Connecticut. Soon the Churches were Congregational in name only. In 1801 came the unfortunate "Plan of Union" with the Presbyterians. Incompatibility brought disillusionment of that union. The yoke of the state was lifted in the same period. Once again the Congregational Way had been cleared of parasitical growth.

In 1871 the National Council was formed to promote relations between sister Churches. The connection was felt to be too tenuous so its portfolio was enlarged in 1913. When the Christian Church united with the Congregationalists in 1931, the General Council was established. Its powers became substantial.

At the Durham, N. H., biennial in 1942 Dr. Frank Sheldon, representing the General Council, and Dr. George Richards, President of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, held preliminary conversations relative to a possible merger. These two grand old men passed from the scene but the ecumenical idea has been carried forward with great zeal by others, despite forbidding differences of polity and theology.

A Truly Free Church

A Free Church has been defined as free of the state, free from authoritative super-church control, and free as to personal commitment of faith. Since the E & R Church does not so qualify, and since ecclesiastical structures always move from simplicity to complexity, the acquiescing Congregational Churches must surrender local autonomy. History affords no precedent of *voluntary* regression from free church status. Heretofore it has been imposed on the faithful. The E & R churches did not have the privilege of voting on the union, but were brought into it *en masse*.

When polity becomes more rigid, theology becomes more doctrinaire. The "sterner faith" will embrace a creedal expression such as we hear in the E & R Church. We of the Congregational Way simply agree to follow Jesus. The central body of His teachings, the Sermon on the Mount, contains neither ecclesiastics nor dogmatics. It is concerned with attitudes, self-discipline, and service to others. He speaks of healing, comforting, and a service of love. For Congregationalists the synoptic gospels, with their emphasis on ethics rather than subsequently concocted ritualistic potions, have primacy. Yet within the Congregational Way lies freedom for every interpretation and every emphasis. There is latitude for the maturing minds which need make no pretense of comprehending the incomprehensible.

In polity the Congregational Way retains the pattern of the primitive Churches; in theology it looks to the liberty, which Paul observed, was in Christ. It leads to the spirit and the evidence

(Continued in Column 2)

Mrs. Arthur J. Benoit, Dunbarton, New Hampshire

I prefer the Congregational Way to the United Church Way. Can I be certain my choice has been the right one? . . . . Perhaps not but I *can* be certain it was not arrived at lightly. For the past four years countless hours of my time have been devoted to good reading matter, the study of our glorious heritage, exchanging letters with people whose integrity cannot be questioned, and talking about it to groups and interested individuals.

It seems right to remember that our churches have been promoted by human beings and as a result have sustained weaknesses and fallen into traps. *Action* has been over-emphasized, the *doer* over-glorified; whereas the *thinkers* have been either ignored or scorned. In their perhaps admirable but misguided search for spiritual unity they have frowned on out-spoken disagreement with denominational leaders and those of us who have dared to disagree, — and disagree we must if we are to remain true to our principles, risk being branded as "crackpots" or a "vituperative minority." But why "vituperative?" Can it be that truth has become such a stranger that they have mistaken critical thinking and questioning for abuse? Can it be that rubber stamp operations in our church life have robbed us of the art of disagreeing without being disagreeable? If we are to protest the falsity of the charges against us we must not forget to be kind to those with whom we have our differences. It would be a mistake to charge entire religious bodies with the destruction of our freedoms, no matter how well founded or documented such charges may be. Such charges will only deepen divisions and create ever-widening pools of anti-this and anti-that. We are still being tagged "anti-mergerites" in spite of our wishes to be known as "pro-Congregationalists." Even so, we must continue to take issue with the individuals who are responsible for threatening our freedoms.

Clouding the Issues

Fearful of appearing reactionary or being regarded as obstructionists our church women have plunged headlong into a sea of ever increasing activity. Some of it is of course important to the life of the local church but much of it a result of voluminous amounts of promotional literature from "higher up." They have smiled at us and patted us on the backs so much for our trust in them that it has come to be regarded as a sin not to trust the leaders, who, claim "to know the will of God." Can it be that women's groups have been discouraged in reading, studying, or discussing the complex issues because the methods of promoting the United Church have been devious? The Basis of Union and promotional material written by pro-union leaders has served only to confuse and cloud the issues, so it appears they subscribe to and practice the philosophy of Talleyrand who one hundred and fifty years ago said "words were invented to conceal rather than to reveal one's thoughts."

A Good Future

If the United Church becomes a legal entity and large numbers of our churches choose to join it I am sure it will number many fine citizens and noble souls. It would be rather presumptuous to believe our light will always shine brighter than theirs. But, by allowing no overhead authority to cramp or confine our spirit we will surely attract ministers and lay people to the Way.

There is a little insistent idea that simply will not stop singing round in my head; the fact that our future Congregational life will be good; that is, if we play according to the rules, and inner unification can be achieved as we continue to commit ourselves to the responsibility for our own consciences.

(Continued from Column 1)

of a faith, rather than to the letter. Its fidelity, its native simplicity, and its freedom from all excesses, exacts devotion. It has no need for external compulsions. Its only command is that of Jesus, "Follow me." In doing so we are to learn the truth that is to make us free. For us there can be no other way.

WOMEN'S WORK

Let's Gather Together

Mrs. Robert E. Collins, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Concern has been expressed by Congregational women who feel they are "alone" in their locality. Would you like to meet with others who share your beliefs? Would you like to be better informed, vigilant, active, concerned Congregationalists adding strength by joining with those who share our Congregational freedom of Christian conscience? Of course you would! Then let's do something about it.

Whether the group be women, families, couples, there is much in common. There must be a purpose, a need, a desire, a goal. Whether it is one, two, three or twenty, a steering committee is indicated stating its purpose for calling a group together, consulting together about the time and place of the proposed meeting, how the notice shall be given, and handling the mechanics of its organization. The presiding chairman "issues the call" and presides while the assembled group chooses a permanent chairman and scribe and any other officers deemed necessary. It is also good policy to have a set of resolutions drafted in advance to submit to the meeting.

How to get specific names to contact depends largely on the group anticipated. One group contacted churches known to be of like mind, supplementing with names obtained from various mailing lists available. Where the public press is receptive, notices of such a proposed meeting may be publicized.

Rule or Guide?

"Roberts Rules of Order Revised" may be a "guide" for conducting a meeting in an orderly fashion. However, insure that the spirit of Congregationalism flourish like a beautiful plant whose soil is common sense, whose root is justice, and whose flower is the beautiful fellowship we have all enjoyed. Of prime importance for such a gathering is to assure those who attend that it will be worth their time, present a challenge to insure continuing meetings, and a fellowship never to be forgotten.

We all have faith in human beings dedicated to a common cause, a way of life not to be taken lightly, but rather to be cherished and nurtured because of the freedom of democracy and fellowship of sharing talents of ordinary qualities — successful because these qualities were developed to more than an ordinary degree.

Sharing and Fellowship

The financing of such a meeting may be in various ways: registration donation, silver collection, or out and out financial assistance by an individual, group or church. Refreshments always attract people. The sharing of food — box lunch, sandwich, luncheon, or light refreshments — takes on a special glow with fellowship and sharing of ideas, ideals, experiences, and enthusiasm. There is always a sympathetic, interested, understanding ear in every group.

Where groups have already gathered, helpful suggestions may be gleaned. The main concern is for one interested, concerned Congregationalist who wants to do something about this precious living heritage of ours. It may very well be you, and why not? Many years ago, one man, Jesus, started alone gathering a few followers around Him who in turn became concerned and inspired to go on. What would we have today if people hadn't carried the torch on and on? The time is right — now — take the torch and hold it high for all to see as we gather together.

What Some Women Have Found

Mrs. Robert M. Francis,
Church of the Messiah, Los Angeles, California

Fellowship Together

On March 3, 1959, 250 women, representing six National Association Churches, met at Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona, California, for a day of fellowship. The highlights of the day included a discussion of Continuing Congregationalism by Rev. Neil H. Swanson Jr., Executive Secretary of the National Association, luncheon served by the Priscilla Guild of the host Church, and "The Easter Story in Kodachrome" by Florence Turvey Reeves.

About Missionary Giving

At a recent meeting of women representing several Churches of the National Association, the discussion centered on missionary giving. The opinion was expressed that a more personal contact would be valuable, and the need of giving through a central agency was questioned. A retired missionary of my acquaintance has many times told me of her experiences in the mission field, where she often saw missions flourish for a time as they became pet projects of Churches at home, and as suddenly die when the Church at home adopted a new project and transferred funds to another interest. A central agency could have known how much support these missions needed and for how long, and so have avoided leaving them high and dry. A central agency, in studying the overall mission picture can see where need is most acute. We can still develop a more personal feeling toward our missionary projects through an education program.

An Invitation

Dear Congregational Christian Women:

There's a big circle around June 30th — July 1 and 2 on our calendar here at the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles. It is our privilege to be the host Church on those dates to the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches.

We hope that you will begin right now to plan to come to California (that word with magic in it), because the women in our Association are eager to open their hearts and homes wide with Christian hospitality to all of you women across the country. We need to hear about your Churches, your faith, and your works, and to have you share with us your methods of carrying on a successful program. In turn, you may be sure that our women will give you the best they have. What a joy it will be working together to achieve the aims and purposes of Congregationalism.

There will be much for you to see and hear, but best of all your hearts will be warmed because of the kind of fellowship to be found here. Let's make yesterday's experiences the foundation on which we will build a wonderful tomorrow. Until June then — God bless you all!

Cordially
Mrs. Oakes A. Worl, President
The Women's Association
First Congregational Church,
Los Angeles

OUR DEVOTIONAL COLUMN

Rev. Robert B. Dempsey, Carlisle, Massachusetts

A Play on Words

Imbedded in one of the marvellous passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews there is a wonderful play on two simple words — *stand* and *sit*. Hebrews 10:11–12 says "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." The priests of the Old Testament order of worship stood daily in the tabernacle, and later in the Temple, performing their tasks, but Jesus served once as a priest and sat down.

A search through the lists of the furniture of the tabernacle in Exodus and Hebrews reveals an interesting discovery. There are many items, which include altars, a laver, a candlestick, a table, an ark, but there is no chair. The priests did not need a chair, because their duties were never over.

The sacrifices upon Old Testament altars were offered according to divine instruction, but they were only pictures of the one perfect sacrifice yet to be offered. Since they were only the shadows of the real thing, they were unable to accomplish the atonement for sin. The priests carried on their endless round of activities, which prophesied typically the coming sacrifice of the Messiah.

This instructive epistle contrasts the ministry of our High Priest, Jesus Christ, with the ministry of the priests of the Aaronic order. Jesus offered one sacrifice forever, and He sat down. Just before His death on the cross, the Saviour cried out "It is finished!" By His sinless life and His vicarious death, Jesus Christ completed His work of redemption with one perfect, acceptable sacrifice — the sacrifice of Himself. Hebrews 1:3 reads, "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high."

This great truth of the gospel has important implications for our lives. We ought not to strive to merit salvation, because the work of salvation is already finished. Forgiveness of our sins is not something which we purchase by deeds or money. It is a gift bestowed on those who receive it by faith. God grants forgiveness, based on the death of Jesus Christ, to all who will accept His offer.

This also teaches us that in response to such marvellous grace, our Christian lives should be one long expression of gratitude. We are "created in Jesus Christ unto good works." The New Testament makes patently clear that we are not saved by good works, but for good works.

A man who trusts in the one adequate sacrifice for sins, the death of the Crucified One, alone knows the joys of the Christian life. He will one day tabernacle with God forever. The person whose confidence is in his own righteousness will live apart from God in this life and in the life to come. Today is the day of salvation. It is in this life we must place our personal faith in Christ. God promises us no opportunities beyond the grave.

The "gathered" Churches are constrained by this graciousness of God's offer for forgiveness, and the necessity of receiving Christ in this life, to perform the church's one primary task — the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. This is our reason for being.

Rededication at Houlton

The First Church of Houlton, Maine, has recently completed extensive improvements to its building, and on March 1, 1959, held an inspiring service of rededication. This Church was organized in 1811. The present building, formerly the Unitarian, was erected in 1902. When the Houlton Congregational Church was destroyed by fire in 1956, arrangements were made under the pastorate of Rev. Royal G. Davis, for the two congregations to worship together.

Ministers of five denominations took part in rededication services at the First Church of Houlton, Maine, and the settlement of its pastor, Rev. Edward A. Smith, on March 1, 1959.

YOUTH PLANS MADE

Officers of the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship met at South Church, Hartford, Connecticut, on Saturday afternoon February 28. Plans were made for a meeting of the Council (the Executive Committee and one or two delegates from each Church), to be held in Hartford from Friday evening April 17 through Sunday April 19. The Northeast Rally on June 26–28 will be held at the Church in the Gardens, Forest Hills, New York.

A special program about work with refugees in Hong Kong and Formosa, for use at Pilgrim Fellowship meetings, is being prepared by Miss Clare Montgomery. This will be sent to the Churches with the suggestion that their young people use it on May 17 and at that time take up a special offering for this work. Money thus collected may be sent to Alexander Patrick, Treasurer of the Northeast Pilgrim Fellowship, and forwarded by him to the Missionary Society of the Congregational Churches of the United States.

(Reported by Miss Linda Clark, Acting Secretary)

OUR COVER PICTURE

The First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, California, is to be the scene of the annual meeting of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches June 30, July 1 and 2, 1959. The formal notice of the meeting was mailed out to the member churches on March 2, together with quotations from the By Laws relating to delegates and voting. Further notices regarding registration, plans for meals, available accommodations, and mileage for voting delegates, will be sent out in the near future. THE CONGREGATIONALIST expects to publish a complete program in the May issue.

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News Notes

Pennsylvania. A youth rally of the continuing Congregational Christian Churches of Pennsylvania was held at Bethlehem Congregational Church, Duquesne, on March 13 and 14. The theme was "Freedom Under God." . . . The Evangelical Congregational Church, McKeesport, celebrated the burning of its mortgage at special services on Friday evening, January 30 and Sunday morning and evening, February 1. Mr. Roy E. Goodyear was Chairman of the Building Committee. Dr. John F. C. Green is Pastor . . . Music in worship at First Congregational Church, Tarentum has been enriched by the organization of two groups of brass instrumentalists, an adult brass choir and a children's group. This has been accomplished through the work of Rev. Arthur W. Tiffen, Pastor.

Connecticut. John Robert Elmore, Associate Pastor of South Congregational Church, Hartford, was ordained to the ministry on February 19. Dean Emeritus Rockwell Harmon Potter of Hartford Theological Seminary preached the sermon, and Dr. Henry David Gray, Pastor, made the ordaining prayer. Mr. Elmore is a graduate of Bangor Theological Seminary.

Michigan. The Congregational Church at Highland is celebrating its 75th Anniversary this year. A most interesting history of the Church has been prepared. This Church has recently reaffirmed its belief in the Congregational Way.

New Member Churches. The Executive Secretary has received official certification that the First Congregational Church of Wells, Maine, and the First Congregational Church of Mansfield, Ohio, have voted to become members of the National Association.

Old "Congregationalists" Wanted. The Editor will appreciate it if people who have copies of the April, May, September and December, 1958, numbers to spare will send them to him. Frequent requests for the complete Volume 1 from Churches and individuals have depleted the supply of these four issues.

Pastoral Change. Rev. Donald B. Howard, until recently a member of the Executive Committee of the New Hampshire League to Preserve Congregationalism, began work at Grace Congregational Christian Church, St. Johnsville, New York in February.

Vacation Preaching. If any National Association pastors who are planning to attend the Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, June 30, July 1 and 2, are interested in vacation supply preaching on the West Coast, (four to six weeks) with use of parsonage and honorarium, they should communicate at once with the Editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST.

Word has just been received of the sudden death on March 12, 1959, of Dr. Mathew Greener Madden, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Mansfield, Ohio. The sincere sympathy of all is extended to the bereaved family and to the Church so suddenly left without a pastor.

From the Letter Box

Editor: THE CONGREGATIONALIST:

Those who were in attendance at the special meeting of the General Council in the Cleveland Auditorium in 1949, following the lockout, earlier in the day at the Hotel Cleveland, of Congregationalists without "credentials," will recall the booming pronouncement of a merger proponent in the final debate: "The CHURCH must speak with the voice of AUTHORITY!" It seemed as though the walls vibrated with the impact. That a primary purpose of establishing the United Church of Christ was to create a corporate organism which could do this speaking with absolute legal and theological power was openly emphasized from the outset.

There is certainly no reason for surprise at the recent manifesto of the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ favoring the recognition of Red China, or at the adroitly worded press releases which invited the conclusion of news writers that this agency "speaks for" more than two million Christians, purportedly including you and me as Congregationalists. We may say "They do not speak for me," but so far as the public understanding is concerned, "they" have done just that.

The major strategy of recent times has been to lull Congregationalists into a comfortable feeling by assurances that their Congregational freedoms will be fully protected by a forthcoming constitution. Whatever that document may contain in the form of words, we may be sure that there will be nothing in it to inhibit this "speaking for" process. This "speaking for" technique will be calculated United Church of Christ routine through the years to come. The sweeping pronouncements of authoritarian ecclesiasticism, made without reference to the opinions of the rank and file, will violate the individual's right to hold his own thoughts and convey them to others in his own way.

PALMER D. EDMUNDS
Chicago, Illinois

SEPARATE CHECKS, PLEASE!

It is suggested that those making contributions make checks out to each organization separately to avoid the complications of bank deposits and bookkeeping, instead of sending one check, whose amount is to be divided between, say, the Continuation Committee and the National Association, or between the Continuation Committee and the Missionary Society or between the Missionary Society and the National Association. *However*, checks should not be made out separately to projects of the Missionary Society, for the latter will send checks to these individual projects.